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United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

FS-420

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no.420

Managing the Range

October 1988

Range Management

The Forest Service manages range vegetation for a variety of uses, including grazing by livestock and forage for wild horses, burros, and wildlife. Range management involves a variety of measures to: protect fragile areas, such as streams or steep slopes with erosive soils; maintain scenic values enjoyed by visitors to National Forest System lands; control noxious weeds and other undesirable plants; protect wildlife habitat and threatened or endangered plants and animals; maintain and improve ecological conditions; and meet the needs of all who share the range now and in the future.

Range — Rich in Diversity

The National Grasslands and National Forests support a rich diversity of range vegetation, which can generally be defined as grasses, grasslike plants, forbs, legumes, and shrubs. Management of range vegetation requires the application of knowledge, skills, and techniques that are based on ecological principles to maintain or reach desired vegetation objectives. These objectives may be stated in terms of species composition, species diversity, condition, and the ability to provide a specified sustained level of use. Achievement of desired vegetation provides for an integrated mix of related resource uses and values. These include: soil stability, water quality and yield, air quality, open space, plant diversity, endangered plants and animals, recreation use, wildlife and livestock forage, and landscape quality.

The Range Manager

Managers of range vegetation: use multiple-use and sustained-yield principles to prepare management plans and put them into action; seek new knowledge and better methods for meeting the needs of range users and vegetation resources; use measures to produce those plants best suited for forage and browse by animals dependent on the range; monitor range condition through scientific analysis to prevent over-use; regulate livestock grazing according to changing range conditions and other range uses; develop cost-effective range improvements with range users and other interest groups; and control noxious weeds, other undesirable vegetation, and the influences of fire, insects, and disease.